

Latest Trends in Fashions for the Family on Display at Sears

Fashion Board Evaluates Trends

Early in 1956, Sears, Roebuck and Co. announced the formation of the Sears Fashion Board, composed of four full-time members and several associates, all of them women with impressive fashion backgrounds.

Board members visit fashion markets in all parts of the United States as well as the Continent to observe and evaluate developing trends.

They attend first night openings, cover the resorts on summer weekends, see the important fashion shows given by designers and the New York Fashion Group, and study fashion, as it exists, as it changes.

Conferences are held by the Board with leading fashion services, with industry groups and with the textile houses. A vast amount of fashion news from many sources is studied and analyzed as the Board members observe fashion where it starts, chart its course, and ready any changes for the Sears market.

The Fashion Board must keep its fingers on the fashion pulse of the public, and anticipate changes, trends, and subtle shifts in the public's style preferences. Since the Board works with Sears catalog styles as well as its retail stores, the Fashion Board's predictions must not only be correct—they must be right seven months or more before a season, for Sears catalog production is in full swing that far in advance of the appearance of the catalog.

Having appraised all available information regarding a particular trend, a new skirt length, the importance of jewel tones, or perhaps the return of supple fabrics, and vying watched it all from the time it was a gleam in a designer's eye, having noted the degree of promptness of acceptance, and having decided that it may have enduring fashion significance for the coming season, the Fashion Board makes a tentative recommendation.

In consultation with the Sears merchandise departments, outstanding textile producers and fabric houses, the Board then determines the colors that will be most in demand. Thus, through its Fashion Board, its merchandise departments, and its sources, Sears can retail a fashion change for its many retail units.

Heading up the Sears Fashion Board is Mary Lewis, a woman with a wide background of fashion history. She is credited with the emergence of cotton as a fashion fabric. She vacationed in Antibes and came back with the idea for the new thoroughly-Americanized T-shirt. She adapted the peasant skirts worn by Austrian women at the Salzburg Music Festival to the dirndls that have persisted in fashions for two decades.

Miss Lewis had some interesting comments on the fashion picture: "Fashion fashion," she said, "has to be possible at all price levels. Thirty years ago women were unsure of their fashions. They had to know they were right. Today's broad and rapid dissemination of news, through many outlets, including newspapers, keep American women so current they insist their clothes be fashion-right, and promptly.

"Furthermore, they are sure of themselves now, so that even if they have the money, they needn't spend it on a Paris creation to be smartly dressed."

Fashion steps into the spotlight with the opening of Sears Roebuck's new Torrance store yesterday.

The vast new store, located at Hawthorne Ave. and Sepulveda boulevard, in the Del Amo Shopping Center, has combined quality merchandise with the latest trends in fashion—men's and women's, boys' and girls'—as well as up-to-the-minute designs in housewares and appliances.

Particularly interesting to the fashion-wise shopper will be the store's new ready-to-wear department which is to feature late style trends for fall of 1959.

The galaxy of chapeaux—vari-

Tel-Autograph Purchase System

Sears newest stores, like the one opened yesterday in the Del Amo Shopping Center, have scored an important breakthrough in service to customers who prefer to pick up their goods at the time of purchase. The new system, using Tel-Autograph handwritten wire communications, is designed for the customer who makes a purchase after examining a floor sample and wants to arrange to pick up the article at the warehouse or stockroom on his way home.

In most stores, arrangements for such requests are handled on the phone. There is always a chance that a phone line will be busy, and the customer will have to wait. There is always a chance for misunderstanding when people are taking messages in a rush.

Under the new procedure at Sears-Torrance, the salesman goes to a Tel-Autograph transceiver immediately after the customer makes his purchase. In the presence of the customer, the salesman writes full instructions on this instrument. As he writes, the Tel-Autograph machine converts the motions of the pen-like stylus to electrical energy. These signals are transmitted to a receiving Tel-Autograph unit in the storage area.

With the Tel-Autograph system, there is no possible chance for a misunderstanding. The customer's name and the description of the merchandise are spelled out unmistakably. When the customer drives up to the service door, even a few minutes later, he is expected and his purchase is waiting for him.

Sears Stores Are Closed Sundays

Although Sunday openings in the retail trade have been on the increase in recent years, strong opposition to this trend of opening stores for Sunday shoppers has been voiced by many merchant's groups throughout the nation.

During the past year, the controversial subject of Sunday retail openings was reviewed by many state legislatures and in some states laws were passed prohibiting opening on Sunday of any stores except those engaged in selling articles of absolute necessity as determined by law enforcement agencies and the courts.

John G. Lowe, Torrance Sears manager, prior to yesterday's launching of his company's big new store in the Del Amo Center, made known the firm stand that Sears has taken with respect to the Sunday opening question.

"The ruling on the matter as far as Sears is concerned," said Mr. Lowe, "has been in force for nearly two years. It is absolutely unequivocal. It states flatly that no Sears store anywhere is authorized to open on Sunday for the purpose of selling merchandise."

Sears Catalog Notes Store's Great Strides

Customers of Torrance's new Sears store will be able to order from Sears catalog items not regularly carried in the store.

A comfortable catalog shopping department makes it simple to buy from the "wishbook" of the nation.

The story of the book upon which the catalog department is based is probably incomparable in all of publishing history. It is a story of enormous progress in printing and the allied arts, from the early hand-set days to multiple-magazine machines, from the Cottrell flatbed to the giant rotary press.

And it is a story of historical import. When Mark Sullivan, for his "Turn of the Century," sought some manner of reenactment of the habits and customs of the people of the United States over a 35-year period, he turned to the files of Sears big general catalog. Later he wrote that nothing he had received from any other source gave him more valuable information for his book.

As a reference work, the Sears catalog has been used by scores of authors and by all of the motion picture studios. Catalogs of yesterday are not only showing that a certain style or item was popular during a certain period, but the amount of popularity each item enjoyed can also be determined by the amount of space devoted to it.

Because they accurately reflect the styles and furnishings of bygone years, the old catalogs are frequently used by producers of Broadway shows and Hollywood movies. Walt Disney is the proud owner of the most complete set of old catalogs on the west coast and consults them frequently for styles and ideas.

In addition to recording the American merchandising scene over the years, these catalogs represent the work and efforts of thousands of Americans. Edgar Rice Burroughs, author of the famed "Tarzan" series, was at one time a copywriter for Sears catalogs. Norma Shearer, Jean Arthur, Gloria Swanson, Frederic March, Joan Caulfield, Susan Hayward, Anita Colby and Lauren Bacall all graced the pages of Sears catalogs as models in past years.

Leafing through the catalog of the Gay '90's, the reader will find bosom boards, celluloid collars, mourning handkerchiefs, Prince Albert suits, goat skulries, and a wide selection of ornate mustache cups.

Prices in "The Good Old Days?" Well, for example: artificial glass eyes for horses at \$5, a 10-pound pail of salt trout at 85c, a custom-tailored men's suit for \$11, buffalo-hide coats were \$23.50, a vacuum bust developer sold for \$2, and a five-piece parlor suite was priced at \$22.90. In the field of fashion, though, many of the so-called "old styles" are back with us today.

For tie hats for men were featured in 1910 and within the past three years have returned to the American scene. Cuckoo clocks have also reappeared in the latest catalogs after having first been listed in 1894.

Fashion accessories, today a part of every wardrobe, are reflected in a new light in these old books. Silk stockings first appeared in a catalog of 1912, with the stern admonition to purchasers to "treat them carefully." Pajamas were first carried, for men only, in 1899, found no takers, and disappeared.



VIEW OF FEATURE fashion display in women's apparel dept.



FEATURE DISPLAY of clocks, table lamps and pictures as seen from main aisle of home furnishings section.

Great Quantity of California Products Featured at Sears

California industry last year was enriched to the tune of \$181,000,000, the amount Sears, Roebuck and Co. spent for merchandise purchased from 1,887 manufacturers located in more than 150 different cities in the state. The evidence of the huge quantity of California-made produce distributed by Sears to the nation's consumers was obtained through a survey conducted by R. L. Hobart, Sears Pacific Coast general merchandise manager, and furnished to J. G. Lowe, Torrance Sears manager.

Mr. Lowe commented that the heavy merchandise buying of his company on the Pacific Coast is illustrative of one of the reasons for the major industrial development of California and the west and the end of an era which saw the coast serving only as an industrial colony of the east. Many of the things Sears buys in California, Mr. Lowe said, are purchased in sufficient quantities to ship trainloads of them back east over the mountains, reversing a movement of manufactured goods that flowed in the opposite direction for years.

Figures such as those representing Sears purchases of California-made goods would assume even greater importance, it was pointed out, if it were possible to interpret them accurately in terms of the thousands of persons, who, in addition to those employed directly by the company, have had a hand in the manufacture of merchandise for Sears.

"There is real pride and satisfaction to be gained," said Mr. Lowe, "out of the realization that so much of what we buy is made by people who are, in effect, neighbors of ours in this great Western country. More and more the company's merchandise needs will continue to be supplied by western manufacturers. This is mighty indicative of the vast growth we have experienced on the coast and helps bring home to us a vivid appreciation of the importance our western economy has assumed in the eyes of the nation."

GEORGE SCHERQUIST HEADS CONSTRUCTION DEPT.

One of the men in the Sears organization whose responsibilities require him to get in on the ground floor of every construction job the company undertakes on the Pacific Coast is George Scherquist, territorial construction manager.

ROCKCOTE SHADE-O-MATIC NEW DEVICE FOR BLENDS

Color-conscious customers whose decorative urge propels them to seek a punctiliously perfect match to any one of hundreds of different paint tones, or who wish to achieve an altogether new and individualistic blend, will be rapturously fascinated by an ingenious machine installed on the back wall of the paint department of Torrance's new Sears store.

Year-Round Air Conditioning Used

Year-round comfort is assured customers and employees of the big Sears, Roebuck and Co. store in Torrance.

A new type, modulated temperature system provides air-conditioning throughout the building, cooling or heating the air according to seasonal requirement, J. G. Lowe, Sears manager, explained.

With this system, temperatures may be regulated by zones within the store. Thermostats may be regulated for either heating, cooling, or just ventilating air, which is sent by an intricate duct network to the part of the building requiring the conditioned air.

By this method, a supply of conditioned air is always available to meet the requirements of any of 29 different parts of the huge store. A modulated, even temperature is maintained, although various activities may be occurring at different sections of the building and at various times of the day.

On mild days, 100 per cent outside air can be introduced, filtered and circulated throughout the building, thus effecting substantial savings in operating costs when the outside air is cooler than the inside of the building.

The entire system cools or heats, ventilates, circulates and filters the air before it reaches the space to be air-conditioned. The cooling is provided by equipment of 572-ton refrigeration capacity. It circulates 1500 gallons of chilled water per minute. Giant fans blow 326,000 cubic feet of cleansed and cooled air throughout the store each minute. By means of this system a complete change of air is accomplished every seven minutes.

ed until 1908, when they returned to stay.

It wasn't until 1924 that Sears dropped white duck covered wagons from the catalogs and

while harness and saddlery occupied 31 pages in 1907, it takes only one page in the 1959 catalog. Buggies, which occupied 22 catalog pages in 1896, had disappeared by 1933, and the first talking machine was listed in 1898.



WEARING APPAREL DEPARTMENTS, designed to meet the needs of the men, women and young ladies in the family, will be managed by these seven department heads (left to right): Mildred Benzenberg, girls' wear; Stan Firestone, men's work clothing; Helen Crozier, hosiery; Grace Kirtland, lingerie; and Harold Edwards, men's dress clothing; Vivian Carlson, millinery; Francis MacDonald (center, rear), men's furnishings; Gertrude Meyer, infants' wear; James McCaffrey, ladies' sportswear; Aiden Lockhart (center, front), boys' wear.